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HOURS OF REFLECTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"BRITAIN'S KOH-I-NOOR."

FIRST SERIES.

LONDON :

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1854



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1911

Submission due to Providence.

SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT.

WHAT right have I to murmur, to murmur at my lot?
Or to be discontent with the Creator's decree?
He has made me of clay, like the potter his pot,
And like he with his ware may he deal not with me?

Aye, many a vessel on the wheel is thrown,
And others are moulded, and others are cast;
And when in their turn to the master they'r shown,
Their birth he assigns them from first to the last.

Some vessels when thrown into vases are turned,
And sent to the castles of princes and kings;
And others are used for the butter when churned,
And others for various much meaner things.

Some vessels are valued beyond any price,
And others are used, but scarce mentioned their name,
And should it be done, not even from choice,
The lips that pronounce them are oft put to shame.

Thus mortals that are themselves made of clay,
May do as they like with what they produce;
It can not be questioned the Creator He may
Do with all his creatures whatever he choose.

I'll therefore not murmur but patient submit
To what He decrees that should be my lot.
I'll dwell in a palace, if He should think fit,
I'll go to a dungeon, I'll live in a cot.

And praise I will give to Him that has power
To raise and to lower my station in life;
On Him I'll rely, He shall be my tower
Of strength and of comfort in world's busy hive.

Desting.



What I was, what I am, and what I once shall be,
I'm not thro' men's power, nor even thro' me ;
There's a hand from above, there's stretch'd a hand
With a powerfull, with a mighty arm,
Without whose will and whose consent,
No one on earth can do me harm.

That hand unseen has led me forth from the very day I first saw light,
'T has nurtured and has guided me thro' the scenes of life, some dark some bright,
'T has led me thro' world's labyrinth, thro' forests, fields and cities fair,
And many a year I now have spent, in pleasure, and in joy or grief,
But ne'er my spirit yet was bent, tho' toil and mishaps I did share,
Since trusting in that unseen hand, I found, when troubled, sure relief.

And while I live I will not cease to trust in that protecting power,
That leads me thro' this world of grief, shews me the way to Eden's bower,
That gives me strength and grants support when overwhelm'd with worldly care,
That cheers when sad and gives to drink of consolation when in pain,
That makes partake th' unhappy man what's due to him of fortune's share ;
To that unseen, that mighty hand, I'll trust, and shall not trust in vain.

THE MIDNIGHT KNELL.

Or, The Thirty-first of December, 1853.

HARK! hark! the church bell's tolling!
Hark! hark! it strikes the hour!
Hark; the waves of time are rolling
Down, down Tethy's cooling bower!

Sixteen, in all, I've counted,
Four first, twelve after it;
That's the hour, of yore, 'twas haunted
By the spectres from the pit.

What may have caused the tolling?
For whom was meant the knell?
And why are so many counting
The slow striking of the bell?

And some one thus rejoined me:
"Dost thou not know th' event?
Well, my friend, then I will tell thee—
The Old Year has reach'd its end.

And many folks are waiting
To greet the New Year's luck,
And their joy makes them forgetting
To look for one moment back.

All people seem rejoicing
To see the Old Year gone;
Aye and yet that Year did something
Good that others have not done.

True 'tis Peace seems disturbed;
But how scarce is the Year,
Where World's Peace is undisturbed
For and after Christmas cheer.

Three years are just determined
Since the new year 'Fifty-One,
When World's Peace seemed well secured
While the Crystal Palace shone.

When forty diff'rent Nations
Sent all that Skill had done
To join in the competition
For the honours to be won;

And forty Flags were greeting
The all-astounded eyes,
And, all-peaceful, seemed uniting,
Friendly, tow'ring to the skies!

And, joyful, in November,
Many guests left Britain's coast:
But, look on how sad December
Showed the pale, the Warlike ghost!

Though Peace was not disturbed,
War had not begun to rave,
Yet all eyes were looking forward
That it soon must leave its cave.

Yet most people were contented
With the Eighteen 'Fifty-One;
When World's Industry had flourished,
And great honours had been won.

And the Year that's just concluded
Prosperous it has been like none
Rapid-moving, unobstruded
In the path of 'Fifty-One.

And the seed then strewed and buried
In a good productive land,
To the light that Year 'twas hurried
By th' industrious, skilful hand.

Let us, then, not be unmindful,
Let us not condemn the Year;
Let's remember—aye, and thankful—
All the good it brought to bear.

Let's remember how Trade flourished
Let us, thankful, raise our voice;
That, through it, the Poor were nourished,
Though bread reached a famine price;

That the loom of time has finished
An unprecedented brilliant work,
Iron-strong with undiminished
Buoyancy, like finest cork;

That two great and valiant Nations,
Foemen once by land and sea,
Have established good relations:
To be done, what's right they'll see.

France and England, thus united,
Who can break that pow'rful band,
Which Time's loom that year has finished
With th' industrious, skilful hand.

And the union thus effected,
May it last for evermore!
Monuments of faith, erected
On the French and British shore!

May all other Nations join it,
May they cast aside the one
That may chance to rest behind it,
Foe to all if foe to one!

And the Lord of Hosts be praised
For the good that Year has done,
And a safeguard thus was raised
Against the wrongs of any one!

Peace—the wish of all united—
Peace will be enforced by War;
Britons' hopes will not be blighted—
VICTORIA mounts on Triumph's car!

